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ROAD TO THE WHITE HOUSE

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SUPERMAN IN ACTION COMICS

DEATH IN THE LAZARUS PIT!

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LOOK AT THAT. JUST_ *LOOK*

AND NOW LOOK AT *ME*. MY FACE TWISTED AS THAT OF A *FOOL*. SMILING. PROUD. *DELIGHTED*.

THAT IS WHY I MUST *FINISH* WHAT MY DAUGHTER STARTED. THAT IS WHY I MUST *EXCISE* THE REMAINS OF MY HEART.

ATLAS DOES NOT *SMILE*.

Kith & Kin

Superman created by JERRY SIEGEL and JOE SHUSTER

PART TWO

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SMILE OR *NO*, I CAN APPRECIATE HER *STILL*. HER *SPIRIT*, THE BLADE AND THE *FIRE*.

MY DAUGHTER *HONORS* ME, EVEN IN HER *BETRAYAL*.

I *KNEW* SHE WOULD FIND ME. THE DEMON'S BLOOD IS EVER *RESTLESS*. IT IS *RIGHT* THAT SHE BE HERE TO WITNESS THIS TRIUMPH. IT IS *GOOD*...

...BUT THE ICON... HE DOES *NOT BELONG*.

THE DEATH OF A MAN SHOULD BE WITNESSED ONLY BY HIS *KIN*.

THE *PURGING* OF A PLANET SHOULD ONLY BE SHARED WITH *HER CHILDREN*.

BAH... *SENTIMENTALISM*. BEFORE TALIA'S TREACHERY, SUCH SMALL THINGS WOULD HAVE BEEN *BENEATH RA'S AL GHUL*.

I AM READY TO MAKE *FINAL PREPARATIONS*.

PREPARE, *WITCH*. THE EARTH CALLS OUT TO REPLACE *MY* HEART WITH *HERS*.

SHE IS NOT A LADY ACCUSTOMED TO *WAITING*.

WHAT *TOOK* YOU SO LONG?

THE RULES OF THE *GENEVA CONVENTION.* I TAKE IT THAT AMOUNT OF FORCE WAS *NECESSARY?*

NO, IT *WASN'T.* IT MADE ME *FEEL BETTER.* I AM DISTRAUGHT ABOUT FATHER.

YOU'RE A *PIECE* OF *WORK* IS WHAT YOU ARE.

YOU'VE BEEN *PREOCCUPIED* SINCE WE FOUND THE SHIP. WHAT DO YOU THINK HE'S *DOING* UP HERE?

MY INFORMANTS KNEW *NOT* HIS MIND. I WAS THE ONLY ONE HE KEPT *COUNSEL* WITH --

TALIA... I MAY NOT BE AS *SMART* AS *"THE DETECTIVE,"* BUT I'M NOT AN *IDIOT.*

CHAK

YOUR EYES ALLOW YOU TO SEE ALONG THE *ENTIRE* SPECTRUM, YES? LOOK FOR RADIO-ACTIVE *TRACE ELEMENTS.*

GOT IT. *NASTY* MIX. *NUKES?*

NUKES. *FEH.*

PRAY IT IS JUST *"NUKES."*

CHOOM

NO... NOT THIS. OH, PAPA... ...YOU SWORE IT WOULD NEVER GO THIS FAR...
I TAKE IT THIS ISN'T JUST A FLYING LAZARUS PIT.
"INDEED, THIS IS INFINITELY MORE POWERFUL THAN THAT PROFANE BREW. HE HAS THEORIZED FOR YEARS -- BUT THE RISKS -- I NEVER DREAMED...
"IT IS CALLED THE CRUCIBLE. A MAN ENTERS..
"... A GOD EMERGES.
"A GOD OF THE EARTH."

I GUESS WE CAN'T LET THAT HAP --
WHOLFF!
I GUESS YOU HAVE NO CHOICE, HOMBRE.

DO YOU *LIKE* ME?

I THINK I CAN SAY WITH *UTMOST* CONFIDENCE --

-- *NO.*

IT'S BECAUSE I'M A ***MASTER ASSASSIN,*** ISN'T IT? YOU'D BE ***SURPRISED*** HOW FEW WOMEN FIND THAT ***ATTRACTIVE.***

PITY. I LIKE ***YOU.***

THAT WHY YOU HAVEN'T KILLED ***ME*** OR MY ***FRIENDS*** YET --?

SHH, SHH. SO ***ANXIOUS*** TO DISCUSS BUSINESS? I THOUGHT YOU'D RATHER LIKE TO TALK ABOUT SOMETHING ***ELSE.***

ME, FOR EXAMPLE. MY ***WORK.***

THIS IS A TWO ***HUNDRED*** CARAT GOLD CUSTOM CRAFTED LEFT-HANDED PEN, ***FORMERLY*** OF ONE LESTER WINTHROP THE THIRD --

-- WHO WAS ABLE TO NEITHER KEEP HIS ***MOUTH*** SHUT, NOR BEND TO THE WHIMS OF THE ***TONGA TRIAD*** WHO TOOK OVER HIS COMPANY.

BEFORE I KILLED HIM, I POSED THE FOLLOWING QUESTION: IF YOU COULD TAKE BUT ***ONE*** ITEM WITH YOU TO THE NEXT LIFE, ***WHAT*** WOULD IT BE?

HE INDICATED ***THIS PEN.*** A TOKEN OF HONOR FROM HIS PREDECESSOR.

I USED IT TO SCRAMBLE HIS ***FRONTAL LOBE*** THROUGH THE ***EYE SOCKET.***

MISS LOIS LANE... WHAT WOULD ***YOU*** TAKE WITH YOU TO THE AFTERLIFE?

IF YOU WANTED TO *KILL* ME, I'D BE A FORGOTTEN *SMEAR* IN AFRICA INSTEAD OF LISTENING TO YOUR PSYCHO *PICK-UP* LINES GOD-KNOWS-WHERE.

I'M ALIVE FOR A *REASON*, AND YOU'RE NOT GOING TO CHANGE THAT FOR SICK KICKS, SO WHY DON'T YOU STOP TRYING TO *SCARE* ME --

-- AND TELL ME *WHO* HIRED THE LEAGUE TO KILL *SUPERMAN?*

...

ANSWER *MY* QUESTION *FIRST.*

WHAT WOULD YOU *TAKE?*

WHAT WOULD YOU TAKE?

...

YESSS... VERY GOOD. *VERY* GOOD.

YOU HAVE BEEN *DUPED*, MISS LANE. THE LEAGUE OF ASSASSINS KNOWS *NOTHING* ABOUT THE ATTEMPT ON SUPERMAN'S LIFE --

-- WHICH IS *EXACTLY* WHY YOU'RE ALIVE.

YOUR UNINVITED, THOUGH NOT *UNPLEASURABLE*, PENETRATION OF *TRITON SHIPPING* FORCED US TO TAKE A SECOND LOOK AT SAID *FRONT*...

"WE DISCOVERED THE *UNTHINKABLE*. AN UNKNOWN PARTY INFILTRATED THE LEAGUE --

"-- USED OUR RESOURCES TO STAGE AN ATTEMPT ON *SUPERMAN'S LIFE* AND PROMPTLY *DISAPPEARED* --

"-- ALONG WITH OUR *SHIP*, OUR *SECURITY*, AND OUR *HONOR*, SOMEWHERE OFF THE *RUSSIAN COASTLINE*.

"NEEDLESS TO SAY... THE MASTER IS *VEXED*. FOR A PERSON TO DUPE THE LEAGUE AND *VANISH*...

"...THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE MORE *RUTHLESS*, MORE *CUNNING*, THAN *RA'S AL GHUL HIMSELF*.

"IF SUCH A PERSON HAS DEDICATED HIMSELF TO THE MURDER OF *SUPERMAN*, MISS LANE, I PROMISE YOU...

"...THE *WORST* IS *YET* TO COME."

ENCANTADORA, WHAT'S *HAPPENED* TO YOU?

WHAT ARE YOU *DOING*?

PLEASE... HE WILL GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO *LEAVE*. GO. I DON'T WANT YOU -- YOU *CAN'T* SEE ME LIKE THIS.

YOU CAN'T *UNDERSTAND* --

"MY HEART, ALL MAD WITH MISERY, BEATS IN THE HOLLOW PRISON OF MY FLESH."

MINE. NOT SHAKESPEARE'S. I LENT IT TO HIM.

AFTER MY DAUGHTER BETRAYED ME FOR LITTLE GODS, I REALIZED IT IS THE FLESH AND BONE AND SOUL OF ME THAT ALLOWS FOR MY REPEATED DEFEAT.

"NEVER AGAIN. USING LA ENCANTADORA'S MAGICS AS THE CONDUIT, THE CRUCIBLE WILL TRANSFORM THIS 'PRISON' --

"-- INTO THE BODY OF A TITAN. THEN... ONLY THEN WILL I BE ABLE TO PURSUE MY WORK UNFETTERED BY YOU AND YOUR ILK."

"WORK"?! WHAT WORK WILL THERE BE IF YOU SUCCEED, FATHER?!

YOU TOLD ME YOURSELF THE CRUCIBLE COULD LITERALLY TEAR THE GLOBE APART!

ENCANTADORA, YOU'RE MESSING WITH FORCES WAY OUT OF YOUR LEAGUE, HERE. STOP THIS OR YOU'LL KILL MILLIONS --

BILLIONS, NOVIO. HE HAS SHOWN ME THE SIMULATIONS. BILLIONS...

...BUT BILLIONS MINUS ONE.

SOMETIMES WE HURT THE ONES WE LOVE TO SERVE A GREATER GOOD...

SOMETIMES WE SAVE THEM, AND DAMN THE WORLD CRASHING DOWN AROUND US.

LOOK BEYOND THESE WALLS, ICON, AND TELL ME...

...WHICH WILL YOU DO?

I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO STOP --

-- YOU?

"HOW BIG IS *YOUR* HEART, ICON?

"*LA ENCANTADORA'S CORAZON* IS ONLY BIG ENOUGH TO HOLD *ONE* SMALL BOY, HER *BROTHER*.

"EARTHQUAKES OR FLOODS OR THE *BILLIONS* WHO WILL DIE AT HER HAND MEAN *NOTHING* WEIGHED AGAINST HIS SAFETY.

LOIS?

"AND YOU? WHAT ARE THE LIVES OF A *BOY*... AND A *CLEVER REPORTER* IN THE BALANCE OF YOUR *CONSCIENCE?*"

DISRUPT ENCANTADORA'S SPELL, THEY *DIE*. ATTACK THE CRUCIBLE, THEY *DIE*. ATTEMPT TO SAVE *ONE*, LOSE THE *OTHER*.

YOU *CANNOT* LIBERATE THEM BOTH. TRUST ME. I *KNOW*.

LASTIMA, SUPERMAN... I COULDN'T TELL YOU ABOUT *VICTOR* FOR FEAR OF WHAT WOULD *HAPPEN*.

HE MEANS *EVERYTHING* TO ME. *EVERYTHING*.

YOU SEE, NOW... WHY A *HEART* IS MAN'S GREATEST *WEAKNESS?*

ENCANTADORA...

...YOUR BROTHER IS *DEAD*.

I SEE *EVERYTHING*, RA'S. THE *BEAUTY* OF X-RAY VISION...

WHAT?!

MONSTRUO! YOU LIED!

CLEVER. BUT *TOO* LATE.

THE *CHILD* -- DID FATHER --?

NO. I *LIED.* *KEEP* ME A *LIAR* AND SAVE THEM *BOTH.*

KOOSH

HEY, YOU MISSED THAT *PORTAL*... *UBU?*

IT *APPEARS*, YOUNG MASTER THAT OUR GAME IS AT AN *END*.

AWWW, COME ON! WE WERE JUST ABOUT TO GET TO THE *LAST LEVEL!*

FEAR NOT, VICTOR... MY MASTER HAS MADE *CERTAIN* THAT YOU WILL REACH THE *FINAL LEVEL*.

GL-CH!

I DO THIS WITH THE *UTMOST* REGRET, MISS LANE. TRULY I BELIEVE OUR *FURTHER* CONVERSATIONS WOULD HAVE BEEN

...*AROUSING*.

HNGH — *URK!*

I WILL *HONOR* YOU IN THIS WORLD AS YOU PASS TO THE NEXT, AND WHEN WE DISCOVER WHO MANIPULATED THE LEAGUE —

— I WILL *WHISPER* THE SECRET TO YOUR *GRAVESTONE*.

VICTOR!
A NOBLE ATTEMPT TO DISTRACT THE WTCH -- ≠HNNGH≠ -- BUT THE WORK IS ≠HARR≠ THE WORK IS DONE! MY ASCENSION BEGINS!
WHAT -- WHAT'S HAPPENING? THIS -- THIS BURNS!

YOU STABBED ME IN THE HAND WITH A *PEN.*

YOU *NOTICED*... COULD YOU LIE DOWN AND *DIE* NOW, PLEASE?

NO ONE'S EVER STABBED ME IN THE HAND WITH A PEN BEFORE.

OH, GOD...

WELL HAS ANYONE EVER CRACKED YOUR *SKULL* OPEN WITH A *QUEEN ANNE CHAIR* BEFORE —?

GO.

WHAT?

GO. *FREE* YOUR COMPATRIOTS. *THIRD* DOOR ON THE LEFT.

BUT --

TA-TA.

DON'T ASK QUESTIONS. *RUN.* NO QUESTIONS. RUN.

YOU TOOK MY HEART AND BLEW IT APART. THIS IS A GREAT START. I THINK I'M IN LOVE.

LOUSY *PSYCHO.*

YOU *FEEL* HER, ALIEN? AS YOUR SKIN *BURNS* AND MINE *SHIFTS* AS BLESSED SAND --

WHO... WHO CALLS? WHO DARES WAKE THIS KISS THIS FIND THIS..?

THAT *VOICE*... WHO --

ENOUGH! BEGONE WITH YOU!

WHA --?

SPLASH

THE CRUCIBLE IS CALIBRATED TO *MY* D.N.A.! ALL ELSE IN THIS BREW IS *FODDER* FOR THE TRANSFORMATION --!

YOUR *STEEL* WILL BECOME *MY* NEW SKIN!

N-NO -- I *ZGCHHE* PULL BACK --

GAIA BONDS WITH ONLY *ONE!* ONLY ONE WITH THE *DESIRE*, THE POWER, THE *WILL! YOU* WILL BE ABSORBED! YOU WILL FEED --

NO... WAIT.

MONSTRUO! YOU *KILLED* HIM -- I'LL *KILL* YOU, YOUR DAUGHTER -- YOUR *DREAMS!*

¡LOS MATARE A TODOS!

LOURDES?

?

AM I IN TROUBLE?

¡OH DIOS, VICTOR! VICTOR..

VIRGEN SANTA. GRACIAS. GRACIAS. LO SIENTO, VICTOR. LO SIENTO

YOU. THE DAUGHTER...

TH-ANK --

NO. WHAT I DID WAS NOT FOR YOU. NOR FOR THE CHILD. I HAVE DONE THIS ONLY TO SAVE FATHER.

I DO NOT WANT THANKS. I WANT RESULTS.

YOU'RE A LOT LIKE HIM, NOVIA.

... BUT THANK YOU, ANYWAY.

LOURDES, I-IS THAT SUPERMAN?!

"WAIT"? HOW DARE —?

I HAVE SERVED YOU *LOYALLY* SINCE THE DAWN OF *CIVILIZATION!* BETRAYED MY OWN *WORLD* TO FREE YOU!

BOGHLF

I AM YOUR *PERFECT MATE!*

YOU ARE...

EMPTY.

EMPTY, SAVE FOR A *VOID* THAT WOULD *CONSUME* ME, AS IT HAS *YOU.*

NOOOO!

GO, BEFORE YOU SPOIL THE *VESSEL.*

FATHER!

HURRGH

BUT *YOU... RAREST* OF ELEMENTS... *PURE. FULL.*

LOVING AND *LOVED.*

YOU CAN HEAL ME. .

NO! NO, YOU ARE HERE FOR *ME!* I AM THE ONE! I —

FATHER! WE MUST STOP THIS! WHAT YOU HAVE UNLEASHED — WE MUST *TURN BACK!*

NO! I AM NOTHING WITHOUT HER!

THIS IS ALL I HAVE LEFT! THIS IS ALL I AM!

KRAK

THE DEMON'S HEAD IS TIMELESS. THE DEMON'S HEAD IS GRACE. SPEAK ILL OF MY FATHER AGAIN, AND I'LL HAVE YOUR TONGUE.

NOW DO YOU CARE TO TRY AGAIN, MASTER?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH SUPERMAN?

SAME THING THAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, VICTOR.

.. HE HAS ME IN HIS LIFE.

I'M TRYING TO PULL BACK... BUT THE MUST... IT WON'T STOP.

I CAN FEEL IT, BURROWING INTO THE EARTH... PULLING...

...CHOKING IT.

LO SIENTO.

TODO LO QUE SIEMPRE HABRÍA QUERIDO, VICTOR. . ERA VERTE CRECER Y SER NUESTRO PROPIO SUPERMAN.

¿CONOCES ALGUNA ORACIÓN, VICTOR? YO HE OLVIDADO LAS MIAS.

WHAT'S HAPPEN -- OH...

GHUL WAS COLD... SO COLD... BUT YOU, LIKE A SUN... TOGETHER --

TOGETHER WHAT WE COULD DO... HEAL THE PLANET...

PLANET. START FRESH.

FRESH. WIPE IT ALL CLEAN --

WIPE IT CLEAN?

THE MANLINGS. CHILDREN GONE AWRY. LOOK AT RA'S. WE SHALL WEED OUT THE FRAIL, THE PETTY, THE UGLY... MAKE THE WORLD BEAUTIFUL, MY LOVE . IF YOU'LL BE MINE.

SUPERMAN?!

IS THIS PART OF THE PLAN?

I DON'T THINK SO, BIM.

WEED OUT THE... RESTORE MY...

. RESTORE MY HEART...

MY HEART.

NO.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WE'RE SO CLOSE...

STOP.

STOP! NO! YOU CALLED ME! YOU CALLED ME!

HRRARRGH!!

LOOKIT! LOOKIT!

LOIS, DON'T *TOUCH* IT -- LOIS!

YEAH, YEAH, JIMMY I'M *ON* IT.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

I... I'M SORRY.. I *KNOW* YOU WERE BROUGHT HERE.. NOT BY CHOICE... AND *NOT* BY *ME*.

THE *"MANLINGS"* NEED A KICK IN THE TAIL FROM TIME TO TIME TO REMIND THEM WHAT *MATTERS*, THEIR PLACE IN THE *WORLD*...

BUT NOT *THIS* WAY *NO ONE* WINS THIS WAY.

NO! I'M SO ALONE... SO ALONE PLEASE.

WE'RE *ALL* ALONE UNTIL WE *OPEN UP* AND TAKE SOMEONE ELSE INTO OUR *HEARTS*.

BESIDES... I'M ALREADY *MARRIED*.

LATER... AFTER THE MIST FINALLY CLEARS...

NOW, I KNOW YOU WOULDN'T *REALLY* FIGHT, BUT JUST SAYING, IF THERE WAS AN *ACCIDENT* OR A *MISUNDERSTANDING* OR SOMETHING --

WHO WOULD WIN IN A FIGHT? *YOU*, OR *MEWTWO*?

HMMM... WELL, HE'S PRETTY *TOUGH*. BUT IF PUSH CAME TO SHOVE...

I WOULD WIN BECAUSE I'M REAL, AND HE'S JUST A *CARTOON*.

I KNEW IT! *I KNEW IT!* I HAVE TO CALL MARCUS! HE'S GONNA *FREAK! THANKS*, SUPERMAN! THANK YOU!

YES. *THANK* YOU, SUPERMAN.

YOU'RE *BOTH* WELCOME.

... ARE WE GOING TO DO THIS *HERE*?

NO. I DON'T NEED VICTOR TO SEE.

YOU'RE GETTING VERY *GOOD* AT THAT.

PRACTICE.

HOLA, OFFICERS... *UN MOMENTO POR FAVOR*?

... IT'S BEEN A *FUNNY RIDE*, NO?

HEH... WHEN YOU *LOOK* AT ME LIKE THAT, I FEEL LIKE I'M IN *SCHOOL* --

-- AND I JUST PULLED *SOMEONE'S HAIR*.

JUST THAT I'VE HEARD IT *BEFORE*, ENCANTADORA. *CHRISTMAS*. LAST SPRING --

LOURDES.

MY NAME IS *LOURDES LUCERO*. WE'VE BEEN THROUGH SO MUCH THAT I JUST THOUGHT...

LOURDES LUCERO... OF *COURSE*.

THIS... *THING* CONSUMED MY FATHER, BECAUSE HE *WOULDN'T* USE ITS POWER.

I THOUGHT HE WAS *UN TONTO.* A *FOOL.*

NOW... I WISH I COULD *HOLD* HIM AND TELL HIM HOW *SORRY* I AM.

DO YOU HAVE A *FAMILY,* SUPERMAN? SOMEONE WHO MEANS THE *WORLD* TO YOU?

I CAN *TELL.*

YES. YES, I *DO.*

YOU DON'T GET TO GROW UP SUCH A *GOOD BOY* UNLESS SOMEONE LOVES YOU.

THAT'S WHY *VICTOR'S* SO GOOD. I *LOVE* HIM. I WON'T ABUSE HIS LOVE PLAYING *ENCANTADORA* ANYMORE.

THANK YOU FOR TRYING TO *HELP* ME. *REALLY.* MAYBE ONE DAY, I'LL *GET IT.*

I BET ONE DAY YOU *WILL.*

SO, WHAT'LL IT BE, MISS *SAWYER?* THE *HANDCUFFS* OR SHOULD WE START WITH *WINE AND DINNER?*

YOU WOULDN'T KNOW WHAT TO *DO* WITH *ME,* SISTER. LET'S GO.

ADIOS, CORAZON.

HE'S *SOMETHING,* AIN'T HE.

WHA — *DAMN!*

TELL HIM I'LL KEEP MY *PROMISE.* I'M *NOT* GOING TO PLAY DORA ANYMORE...

BUT I'M NOT GOING TO START MY NEW LIFE WITH VICTOR *BEHIND BARS.* WE'LL *DISAPPEAR* IN STYLE, AND GET BY THE SAME WAY WE ALWAYS HAVE...

...AS A *FAMILY.*

SIGH I *KNEW* IT. JUST *KNEW* IT WAS TOO EASY...

YOU'VE *GOT* YOUR SECOND CHANCE, LOURDES... *DON'T MESS UP.*

FAMILY IS THE POWER TO *WRESTLE GIANTS*. FAMILY IS THE PAIN THAT LEAVES US *FRAGILE AS GLASS*.

UNFORTUNATELY IT TOOK THE LOSS OF MY *CHILD* TO TEACH ME THAT FAMILY IS, INDEED, *BOTH*.

I'M SORRY... HAVE I TAKEN OVER THE *CONVERSATION*?

YOU WERE EXPLAINING *WHY* I SHOULD TAKE YOU BACK WHEN YOU MISSED THE MOST *IMPORTANT* PRESS CONFERENCE SINCE *MOSES* CAME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN?

MY FATHER AND I HAD... *BUSINESS* ISSUES TO RESOLVE. FAMILIAL *PHILOSOPHY* REGARDING MY MOVE INTO THE PUBLIC EYE.

THE DISCUSSION WAS LONG IN COMING, DRAWN OUT BY AN UNFORTUNATE *ILLNESS* --

HE *KICKED* YOU *OUT*, DIDN'T HE?

...

NEVER *MET* THE MAN, BUT WE HEAR *STORIES*.

I'M TOLD HE PROBABLY WOULDN'T STAND FOR HIS *DAUGHTER* COMING TO WORK FOR A LOWLY *AMERICAN* --

NOTHING WAS KICKED. I LEFT... WITH *THESE*.

FORTY *DAYS'* WORTH OF *SITAR MUSIC*?

THREE *HUNDRED* YEARS OF SOCIOLOGICAL, GENETIC, CHEMICAL, AND POLITICAL RESEARCH. THE *HEART* OF MY FATHER'S CORPORATION...

NOT TO MENTION THE *PASSCODES* FOR HIS EVERY ACCOUNT. HIS CONTACTS, *LEGITIMATE* AND OTHERWISE, AND THE *BLACKMAIL DOSSIER* HE HAD ON EACH ONE.

YOU'RE *KIDDING*.

I SERIOUSLY *DOUBT* IT.

I HAVE WATCHED MY FATHER FIGHT AN *ENDLESS* BATTLE, ALONE AGAINST A *LEGION* OF ENEMIES. HE HAS COME *CLOSE* TO SUCCESS MANY TIMES --

-- BUT *ULTIMATE* GLORY ESCAPES HIM.

I WILL *NOT* BE THAT PERSON. IF I AM LOSING *ONE* FAMILY... I WILL BUILD A *NEW* ONE...

...FROM THE *BEST* OF ALL POSSIBLE PARTS.

...

YOUR FATHER, *SAVAGELY* EFFICIENT BUSINESSMAN THAT HE IS, DID *NOT* PLAY WELL WITH OTHERS.

IT WAS, IN PART, I BELIEVE, BECAUSE HE HATED TO WEAR *PANTS.* *CLOAKS* AND *SARONGS* HAVE NO PLACE IN THE BOARD ROOM.

I *ACCEPT* YOUR TRIBUTE. YOUR *DREAM.* WELCOME TO THE *FAMILY.*

HOW DOES IT *FEEL,* TALIA? HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE THE *C.E.O.* OF THE MOST *POWERFUL* CORPORATION IN THE UNIVERSE? SURELY, YOU'LL AT *LEAST* CRACK A *SMILE?*

I AM *HONORED,* MISTER LUTHOR... BUT IF THERE IS *ONE* THING I HAVE LEARNED FROM MY FATHER...

ATLAS DOES *NOT* *SMILE.*

END